

# The Dead Horse DISPATCH

April 2011

A newsletter by and for the volunteers of Dead Horse Ranch State Park

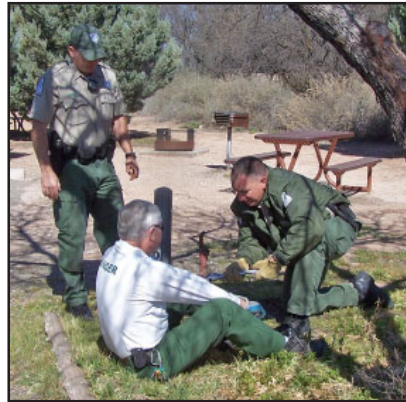


## The Big Freeze!

Single-digit temperatures, at night this winter, caused a variety of problems with water hydrants in the park. Pictured on right are Assistant Manager Justin Swiger watches while Rangers Eric Buzonas and Tony Viotti try to loosen a connection.



Building bird houses and oriole feeders are two of the most popular activities for kids at the annual VVB&NF held in April. The event grows larger every year.



## Verde Valley Birding Festival Going Big!!

story submitted by Barbie Hart

## Stumped over Stumps!



Keven Ward & Pat Rhoades faced a daunting chore when they looked at removing this willow stump along the ditch by the second lagoon. They cut up the four stumps, then worked to get all parts of the stumps well below ground level, before covering it with red sand.

photo submitted by Jim Harris

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival will be held at DHRSP on April 28<sup>th</sup> - May 1<sup>st</sup>. A partnership between Arizona State Parks, the Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Arizona Audubon Society, this event has come to the attention of a national audience and is one of the most popular and well known events of its type in Arizona today. The staff and volunteers at Dead Horse Ranch SP can take a large bow when it comes to taking credit for its success.

The event includes field trips to various birding locations throughout central Arizona as well as walks here in the park, workshops and an exhibition tent. We also provide field trips here in the park for students that participate in an essay contest. On Saturday we host the "Family Nature Fair" which offers free crafts and activities for the kids and their parents.

This year, Gary and Sharon Munson has taken on the role of both getting the word out to local schools about the event's educational opportunities, the Family Nature Fair, and scheduling a special presentation for classrooms throughout the valley. Gary also beat the bushes for donations to support our hospitality booth, vans and building supplies.

Volunteers have already been busy building bird feeder kits, rain stick crafts, cutting out parts for other crafts, and in general getting ready for the big day on Saturday. All this prep work is vital to make the day run smoothly, but there is the day itself when all hands are needed to work with the kids, help setup, breaks, and cleanup.

***We have placed a sign-up sheet with activities and shifts to choose from at the office. Please see if there is a fun activity you might like to help with and sign up!***

Besides that we need:

- 1) Sat morning we need help to get the tables and supplies in place prior to the 10am start.
- 2) The Fair will wind down at 2pm, we need a cleanup crew.
- 3) Another job, during the event, is driving shuttle vans in the park. We hold workshops in the Studio during the event and provide a shuttle from the River Day Use area to the Studio all during the day. We also need drivers to take participants on field trips. Not only do they get to go on the trips, but we supply lunch and a free t-shirt to the drivers. Please talk to Barbie if you might be interested in doing that job as there are special requirements.

Eric Buzonas has adopted the games and crafts end of the Nature Fair in honor of his Mom, who volunteered when she was here visiting. We call it "Mrs. B's Birds and Bugs Booth".

*Please note:* As a special thank you to all the volunteers, staff, committee, trip leaders and vendors setting up on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, we hold a BBQ at the River Day Use area at 5pm.

The end of April will be here before we know it. Please sign up and join the fun and the satisfaction of welcoming folks from all over the country to our beautiful valley. And to share with all the local kids and families who may discover the wonders of nature and their special place here at Dead Horse Ranch State Park.



## Nan's Notes:

Report from Editor Nan at DHRSP!

All stories & photos are submitted by Nan, except where mentioned.

## Reservations about Reservations!

Reservations have come to DHRSP. Assure your site by calling the park number and reserving your site, beginning April 1. Classes were held Monday, March 14, and in a trial by fire maneuver, park staff and volunteers were thrown into the

system Tuesday. Oh, and get this! It was Spring Break!

All transactions in the office are now entered into the new system. The cash register is gone and cash drawers take care of the monetary part of the new procedures. All campsite, ramada and cabin reservations are directly input into the system. Gift shop items are run into the system, and day pass users are put into the system at the close of each day's business.

I won't go into the difficulty of trying to enter campers into the system during a week when the loops were full every night; when people were moving from site to site, from Raven in overflow, and when the phone was ringing off the hook, most with the same question: "Do you have any sites open?" Some of the calls were reservations, and in the midst of chaos, volunteers and rangers learned how to enter them into the computer. There were four people from Phoenix in the office area, as well as four rangers, two volunteers assigned to work, the office manager, and the curious. Park guests were lined up clear out the door while we tried to make everything work.

Is it better now? Some. The Phoenix folk left that afternoon, leaving us to figure it out. Thank heavens Rangers Max Castillo, George Christianson and Justin Swiger had an opportunity to work with the system before it came swinging in like a two-ton tomahawk. In the second week, the weather turned ugly and business slowed a bit, giving us all a little more opportunity to ask questions and read the instructions Max has painstakingly put together for each transaction.

Eventually the system will offer our customers easy reservations online. All transactions in the office will be simplified and tons of paperwork will be eliminated. As we all keep telling ourselves, it will get better. It will get easier, and we might even like it. Meanwhile, we are all hanging in there and trying to do the best we can. Online reservations will be available in a few weeks and that will help, too.



Instructions for the new system were given in two classes at the Greenway. While everyone feverishly took notes and asked questions, nearly all of the volunteers and rangers found it easier to learn with actual hands-on experience.



Barb Penny checks out the loop map in the new system. This station is set up where the copy machine used to sit. Another computer in the office, and one in the break room, also have access to the system.



Ranger Justin Swiger uses the computer which replaces the cash register at the front desk.

Even a snowstorm didn't stop campers from enjoying a visit to DHRSP. The snow didn't last long and Fido had to be walked. (right)



During the weeks of Spring Break, campsites are at a premium and are full by mid-afternoon. A new rule allows two vehicles at a site, even if they are not family. Only one pays, so some folks with trailers can double up with family members or friends who are tenting. (left)



In the cheering section for the baggo and horseshoe contests were Ranger Justin Swiger and children, Karlee and Wyatt. Also, John Ward (who was a horseshoe contestant). (left)

## Baggo Tossing.. Horseshoe Tossing.. Old Fashioned FUN!!



Here are the semifinalists in the big baggo semifinals, held March 21, at the Greenway (due to bad weather). Margie Sanchez, left, and Norm Hephner, next, faced off Karen Trushel and Patricia Enockson, right. The winners were Karen and Patricia! Congratulations!



Patricia Enockson shows her winning form while Ranger Margie Sanchez looks on. Emerson and Karen Trushel organized both the baggo and horseshoe tournaments and provided refreshments for all. Thanks!

John Ward demonstrates his horseshoe-tossing expertise while Jake Pratt watches. (right)



## Volunteers to do Trailwork for US Forest Service

On Saturday, March 26th, Brenna Kenney of the USFS is coming to do some maintenance trailwork on the Thumper Trail. Last time's work session included some really informative instruction on laying rock to reinforce trail sections. Volunteers will meet at the trailhead across from Heron Road at DHRSP at 9:00 am. Stop at the office to report that you are here to do volunteer trailwork for the US Forest Service. The plan is to work until around 1:00 or 2:00, then head over to Murphy's for some **refreshments** (!!!?) submitted by Eric Buzonas

## AZ SP Newsletter

Would you like to subscribe to AZ State Parks Newsletter and have the opportunity to preview all the parks as well as DHRSP? Then sign up and each month you will get a copy delivered to your email address. Don't forget to click on DHRSP (at the bottom of the newsletter) to take you to our park, where you can preview the "Dispatch" under volunteer information. Share it with your family and friends. Ctrl + Click ...

<http://azstateparks.com/Parks/DEHO/index.html> submitted by Carolyn Meehan



Laurie Blitsch visited the park in March. A potluck was held in her honor, and everyone was able to meet her friend, Joe. Maxine Bean looks on as Laurie and Joe pose for the camera.

A total of 64 teens and five adults from the North Point Expeditionary Learning Academy in Prescott stayed at Raven Loop in March. Their pink tents below were a bright reminder that spring is on its way. It was a chilly stay for the students, many did not have warm enough sleeping bags for the cold nights.



The students formed groups during the day, some at a picnic table, others sat under a tree.

TO ALL "MY BUDS" AT DEAD HORSE. JOE AND I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU THAT MADE OUR VISIT TO THE PARK SO WONDERFUL. IT WAS REALLY GREAT TO SEE EVERYONE AGAIN IT MADE ME REMEMBER WHY I SPENT 13 YEARS AT THAT PARK MAKING WONDERFUL MEMORIES AND EVEN BETTER FRIENDS. KAREN, EMERSON AND MARYAN, THANKS FOR PUTTING THE PARTY TOGETHER, AND TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU THAT CAME TO MAKE IT EVEN MORE SPECIAL. I HAVE CHANGED MY PLANS FOR OUR SUMMER MONTHS. THE HEAD RANGER FROM THE DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST AND PINE VALLEY RECREATION AREA ASKED ME IF I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN A POSITION WITH THE FOREST SERVICE AS INTERPRETIVE COORDINATOR FOR PINE VALLEY FOR THE COMING SUMMER, IT IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE! I WILL BE HIRING THE VOLUNTEERS THAT WILL MAN THE NEW PIONEER MUSEUM, COORDINATE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS FOR SATURDAY NIGHTS AND BE A LIAISON BETWEEN THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE FOREST SERVICE ALONG WITH THE VISITORS TO THE PARK. I AM SO EXCITED AND PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO STAY JUST NINE MILES FROM MY HOME, INSTEAD OF 445 MILES NORTH AND ALSO HAVE A PAID POSITION. I AM SURE THAT MY INITIATING THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AT DEAD HORSE AND HAVING THEM BECOME SUCH AN ASSET TO THE PARK IS DEFINITELY WHY THEY WERE ANXIOUS FOR ME TO MAKE THE DECISION TO ACCEPT THEIR OFFER. I WILL DEFINITELY MISS PICKING CURRANTS, ELDERBERRIES, CHOKE CHERRIES, RASPBERRIES AND HUCKLEBERRIES, BUT I REALLY DO HAVE ENOUGH JAMS AND JELLIES TO LAST AT LEAST FIVE YEARS. THANKS AGAIN TO EVERYONE. FONDLY AND WITH LOVE, LAURIE BLITSCH



Alaskan Update  
from Les...



Above is a shot of the Dillingham Beaver Roundup sled dog races. Today was the last of three days. A friend of mine, John, came in third. Next is a photo of a traditional Eskimo blanket toss. The "blanket" is made from walrus hide. I'm enjoying my duties with the University of Alaska's Adult Education Program and Elizabeth is thriving in her roll with Kanakanak Hospital. She has been certified in many new areas, the most exciting for her is Air Evac. Nurse. I've lost count of how many babies she's helped deliver. Thirty-two remote villages utilize Kanakanak Hospital. None of them, including Dillingham, are linked by roads. And, of course, the biggest Alaskan news: John Baker, Alaskan Native, wins the Iditarod in record time! He and his dogs covered 1,123 miles of barren, desolate, frozen wilderness in 8 days, 18 hours, 46 minutes and 39 seconds. I'm surprised this race doesn't have more in-depth coverage by a major network. Competitors across the globe come. It's possibly the most grueling race/athletic event anywhere in the world.

stories and photos submitted from former Manager Les Bovee



## April 2, 2011: Volunteer Venture Statewide Volunteer Training & Recognition Event at Catalina SP

Thanks to the generosity of our partners, the Arizona State Parks Foundation and the Bureau of Land Management, we are able to hold the Volunteer Venture and Site Steward Conference this year at Catalina State Park. Please join us for training and recognition and to enjoy the company of fellow volunteers!

Ctrl + Click the following links below to register online or for more information:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VolVent\\_SiteStReg](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VolVent_SiteStReg)

<http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/164667/119cec452f73000905/b4fef32ccb/>

*from Volunteer Venture submitted by Carolyn Meehan*

*Hi Nan and Eric, We just finished reading the "Dispatch" which got buried in our mail pile. Wanted you both to know how much we enjoy keeping in touch with all the volunteers and the park. Thanks so much for the entry about our grandson, Rhys passing. We appreciate the warm thoughts. We are in NH to be with our daughter and son-in-law for a couple more weeks and will then be heading back to Red Rock. Look forward to seeing all of you again too.*

*Fondly, Bill and Anne Zeller*

*Hi Eric, We have decided to reduce our commitments this summer and spend more time at our home here in Havasu. We hope that this coming summer will be a good one for everyone working. Please say hello to everyone, and that this note finds all in good health.*

*Sincerely- John & Mary Lou Anderson*

*Carl Hartman is "Master of Maintenance"! The guy is top rate and can fix anything when it comes to automotive repair. He owned his own frame and alignment shop. He is super meticulous and detail oriented to the nth degree. Can't say enough about him. Really great guy.*

*Anonymous*

*Greetings Randy, We just read the latest (March) "Dead Horse Dispatch". It is a fine publication and a great way to keep up with the goings on at DHRSP. From the articles, it sounds like you are really making progress on the back country trails. I bet that makes you a happy camper/biker. Great story on Bill & Jan Birtwell, and we were delighted to read that Brenna is still providing trail work guidance. That's a woman that knows about moving rocks. We wish we could have been there for that work party. Keep up the good work. We are about to wrap up our host duties at the South Carlsbad State Beach Campground in SoCal. We will be spending the last half of March on Maui for some surfing (Nancy) and paragliding (Peter), before returning to Washington for another season of Whale Watching.*

*Cheers, Pete and Nancy Hardy*

## Spread the Word, Volunteers! Great Happenings at DHRSP!

*story and Randy photo submitted by Randy Victory*

Beginning Saturday, March 26th and going on until Sunday, May 8th, Park Rangers at DHRSP will offer guided mountain bike rides on Saturdays and ranger-led hikes on Sundays. The hikes & rides are free, however the regular entrance fees to the park will apply. Annual Passes will also be honored. "Mountain Bike Basics" will take place every Saturday afternoon at 1:00, and go until 3:30, "or when everyone gets tired", according to Park Ranger Randy Victory. "These will be beginner trail rides on the dirt, with a little instruction on the pavement." Victory, a certified cycling instructor, will offer everything from basic riding techniques to trail etiquette. Although the rides are oriented towards beginners, everyone is welcome to attend (minimum age is 15). "There's always a certain amount of interaction between riders," explains Victory. "Group rides where the beginners are supportive of each other, and more experienced riders can offer their insight are an excellent way to build skills, and have a great time doing it. The focus is on fun!" Riders will be REQUIRED to wear a helmet and complete an acknowledgment of risk form (parents must sign for riders under 18 years old). They should also bring water and make sure their bike is in good working order. Riding gloves are recommended. The rides will start at the Raptor Trailhead at the top of Roadrunner Road at the park. "Nature Walks" will start on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am, and last for 1-2 hours. The guided hikes will meander along riparian areas or stroll through the high desert trails within the park. Hikers need to bring plenty of water, sunscreen and wear appropriate clothing; sturdy shoes, and a hat. "You might want to bring binoculars and a camera, too. These hikes are a great opportunity for wildlife sightings and photo-ops", said Ranger Margie Sanchez. Most hikes start at the Quail Loop Campground - inquire at the gate for starting points. For more information on both of these events tell the visitors to call DHRSP office at 928-634-5283. Or email Ranger Randy Victory at [rvictory@azstateparks.gov](mailto:rvictory@azstateparks.gov) or Ranger Margie Sanchez at [msanchez@azstateparks.gov](mailto:msanchez@azstateparks.gov) with questions.

## Coming

- \* Jerrie Matthews, April 1, Quail Maint #42
- \* Gale & Judy Schmidt, May 1, Raven #40
- \* "FrankenRose!" May 1, Raven Loop #41
- \* Dave & Carolyn Abbott, May 1, Raven
- \* Doug Palosaari, May 1, Raven Loop
- \* Charles & Billie Castle, May 1, Raven
- \* Betty Hall, May 1, Coopers Hawk
- \* Roy & Judith Farmer, May 1, Cabin Hosts

## Going

- \* 30 Jerrie Matthews (here 1 month)
- \* Carl Hartman, March 25, for WI
- \* Bill & Janet Birtwell, April 1, Seawall Campground, Acadia National Park, ME
- \* Norm & Nan Hephner, April 17, to CO
- \* Jim Harris & Maryan Pharo, April 30, to Granby, CO
- \* Gary & Sharon Munson, April 30, to....?
- \* Karen & Emerson Trushel, April 30, to Chardon, OH, via Santa Fe & Taos, NM
- \* John & Wanda Ward, April 25, to 'O Canada!'

## Dates to Remember in April

- 3/26-5/8 Ranger-led mountain bike rides on Saturdays & Ranger-led hikes on Sundays
- 3/28-Chili Cook Off @ 6pm
- 4/4-Volunteer Meeting, 9:30am, VRG studio
- 4/16-Mickelson Memorial Run morning
- 4/16-Euro BEAT Auto tour afternoon
- 4/18-Volunteer Meeting, 9:30am, VRG studio
- 4/28-5/1 Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival

## April MileStones

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 3-Ruby Stolze         | 13-Tom Sanor        |
| 3-Judy Schmidt        | 15-Brenda Mullins   |
| 4-Joan Gray           | 17-Bruce Williamson |
| 6-Emerson Trushel     | 20-Anne Howe        |
| 10-Toni Mann          | 20-John Pauly       |
| 10-Penny Address      | 21-Shirley Oltmanns |
| 11-Bill & Anne Zeller | 27-Russ Jones       |



*Ranger Randy Victory*



*Ranger Margie Sanchez*